

SAN ANTONIO METROPOLITAN
HEALTH DISTRICT

Pandemic Influenza

*What do Individuals Need to
Do to Prepare?*



June 2006

Bird Flu, Seasonal Flu, Pandemic Flu, What's the Difference?

Bird flu, or avian flu, is caused by a large group of different influenza viruses which occur naturally in wild birds. Domesticated birds may become infected by direct contact with infected waterfowl or other infected poultry or through contact with dirt or cages that have been contaminated with the virus. In rare cases, these viruses can infect other species, including humans. Once in a while, a very severe strain emerges, such as the current strain moving around the world, known as H5N1.



Seasonal flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses infecting humans. Generally, the people who are most susceptible to severe illness and death are the very young and the elderly. Most people recover within one week.

Pandemic flu is a global outbreak, or pandemic, of a highly infectious and severe strain of influenza virus that has been adapted to humans and spreads easily from person to person. Pandemic flu causes severe illness across all age groups. H5N1, the current strain of bird flu, could become a pandemic strain, but at this time it **CAN NOT** be passed from person to person.

The FACTS about Bird Flu

How do people become infected with avian influenza viruses?

Humans become infected from direct or close contact with infected poultry (chicken, ducks, and turkeys) or surfaces contaminated with secretions and excretions from infected birds.

Should I wear a surgical mask to prevent exposure to avian influenza?

Currently, wearing a mask is not recommended for routine use for preventing influenza exposure.

Is there a risk for becoming infected with avian influenza by eating poultry?

No. There is no evidence that properly cooked poultry or eggs can be a source of infection for avian influenza viruses.

We have a small flock of chickens. Is it safe to keep them?

Yes. In the United States there is no need at present to remove a flock of chickens because of concerns regarding avian influenza.

What can I do to reduce the risk for infection from wild birds in the United States?

Observe wildlife, including wild birds, from a distance. Avoid touching wildlife. If there is contact with wildlife do not rub eyes, eat, drink, or smoke before washing hands with soap and water. Do not pick up diseased or dead wildlife.

Pandemic Influenza is not your usual Seasonal Flu

Seasonal Influenza	Pandemic Influenza
Occurs yearly, October - March	Occurs in cycles of 10-40 years, any time of the year
Affects 5-20% of the population, particularly the elderly, infants, and people with existing medical conditions	Affects 25-50% of the population, particularly healthy young adults
In the US, kills 36,000-40,000, with most deaths in the high risk groups	In the US, 70,000 deaths (1957-58) to 500,000 deaths (1918)
Illness usually lasts 5-7 days with full recovery by 2 weeks	More severe illness, for longer period
Vaccine available based upon currently circulating virus strains	Caused by a new virus strain, no vaccine would be immediately available. New vaccine production requires at least six months.
Antiviral drugs have proven useful against current virus strains	Antiviral drugs may be in short supply or may not be as effective against a pandemic strain

How will a Pandemic affect San Antonio and Bexar County?

The arrival of pandemic flu in our community is not likely to hit in one burst, but rather be a slow process developing over time. Once a full-scale pandemic occurs, 30-50% of our population may become ill, which would have a huge impact on our community. Increased awareness will help us to stop the spread of this disease and limit the number of people who get sick. Local public health officials keep in constant contact with state, federal, and international public health epidemiologists who monitor the pandemic flu situation worldwide. San Antonio Metro Health District will release information to the community through a variety of outlets, including TV, radio, print, and the internet. Keep Informed!

www.sanantonio.gov/health



How Do I know If I have the Flu?



The flu is easily spread from person to person when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

A mask helps prevent a sick person from passing on the virus, but is not recommended for those who are not sick.

Typical flu symptoms include:

- fever (usually over 100.4°F)
- dry cough
- headache
- extreme tiredness
- sore throat
- runny or stuffy nose
- muscle aches
- stomach symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, can occur but are more common in children than adults

Protect Your Family's Health

A vaccine for Pandemic Flu may NOT be available immediately. If not, personal protective measures will be critical. Stay healthy. Stop the spread of germs. Follow these basic hygiene precautions:

- ✓ Avoid touching your mouth, nose, and eyes.
- ✓ Cover your mouth and nose with tissue when coughing and sneezing. If you don't have a tissue, cough and sneeze into your sleeve. Throw away tissues after use!
- ✓ Wash hands often in warm water (15-20 seconds). Use an alcohol-based hand cleanser when hand washing is not possible.
- ✓ Limit personal contacts when sick. Be conscious of casual handshakes, or a kiss on the cheek.
- ✓ Get plenty of sleep. Eat nutritious foods. Exercise.
- ✓ When ill, stay home from work, school, or places where there are many people such as grocery stores and movie theaters
- ✓ See www.sanantonio.gov/health for more information.



How Can Your Family Prepare for a Pandemic?

Prepare for an influenza pandemic now. Know what can happen during a pandemic and what you should do to lessen the impact on you and your family. This checklist will help guide you in your preparations. For more information go to:

www.sanantonio.gov/health

Or call (210) 207-5779

To plan for a pandemic:

1. Store a supply of water and food. During a pandemic, if you cannot get to a store, or if stores are out of supplies, it will be important to have extra supplies on hand. This can be useful in other emergencies as well, such as power outages or natural disasters. See pages 10-11 or www.readysouthtexas.gov for more information.



2. Get your annual flu shot
3. If you do not have a primary health care provider who is familiar with your health and medical status, find one now.

4. Maintain a Family Emergency Health Information Sheet. List family member's name, blood type, any allergies, past or current medical conditions, and current medications and dosages.
5. Have nonprescription drugs and other health supplies on hand, including pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, fluids with electrolytes, and vitamins.
6. Volunteer with local groups to prepare and assist with emergency responses.
7. Get involved in your community as it works to prepare for an influenza pandemic.
8. Talk with family members and loved ones about how they would be cared for if they got sick, or what will be needed to care for them at home.



Prepare a Kit of Emergency Supplies

FOOD AND WATER

- ✓ Keep at least a three-day supply of water per person
- ✓ Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- ✓ One gallon of water per person per day, for drinking and sanitation
- ✓ Children, nursing mothers, and sick people may need more water
- ✓ If you live in a warm weather climate more water may be necessary
- ✓ Store water tightly in clean plastic containers such as soft drink bottles
- ✓ Pack a manual can opener and eating utensils

Select foods that do not require refrigeration, preparation or cooking and little or no water:

- ✓ Ready to eat canned meats, fruits, vegetables
- ✓ Protein or fruit bars
- ✓ Dry cereal or granola
- ✓ Peanut Butter
- ✓ Dried Fruit
- ✓ Nuts
- ✓ Crackers
- ✓ Canned Juices
- ✓ Non-perishable pasteurized milk
- ✓ High energy foods
- ✓ Vitamins
- ✓ Food for infants
- ✓ Comfort/stress foods



FIRST AID

- ✓ Two pairs of Latex, or other sterile gloves (if you are allergic to Latex).
- ✓ Sterile dressings to stop bleeding.
- ✓ Cleansing agent/soap and antibiotic towelettes to disinfect.
- ✓ Antibiotic ointment to prevent infection.
- ✓ Burn ointment to prevent infection.
- ✓ Adhesive bandages in a variety of sizes.
- ✓ Prescribed medical supplies such as glucose and blood pressure monitoring equipment and supplies.
- ✓ Thermometer
- ✓ Prescription medications you take every day such as insulin, heart medicine and asthma inhalers. You should periodically rotate medicines to account for expiration dates.
- ✓ Eye wash solution to flush the eyes or as general decontaminant.



Non-prescription drugs:

- ✓ Aspirin or non-aspirin pain reliever
- ✓ Anti-diarrhea medication
- ✓ Antacid (for upset stomach)
- ✓ Laxative

Useful to have:

- ✓ Scissors
- ✓ Tweezers
- ✓ Cell Phone
- ✓ Petroleum jelly or other lubricant



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